City of Austin Equity Assessment Tool (DRAFT)

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INTRODUCTION

In order to transform policies and practices that perpetuate institutional racism and systemic inequities, institutions need formal tools to closely examine budget allocations, priorities, and programs. The Equity Assessment Tool leads with race, as race is the primary predictor of access, outcomes, and opportunities for a significant number of quality of life indicators. By focusing on racial equity, this tool introduces a framework that can be applied to other oppressed social identities, including age, gender, sexual orientation, and ability. The Equity Assessment Tool systematically integrates purposeful consideration and consciousness to ensure that budget and planning decisions reduce disparities, promote service level equity, and improve community engagement.

BACKGROUND

Austin's history of racial inequity reinforced by segregationist policies throughout the 20th century has continued to negatively impact the City's communities of color. Most notably, the City of Austin's Master Plan of 1928 divided the City along racial lines by moving community services for African American and Hispanic/Latinx residents to East Austin. This compelled residents of color to move into the segregated district east of Interstate 35, which was zoned 90% industrial at the time [citation needed].

While Austin was most recently recognized by US News and World Report as "The Best Place to Live in the U.S.," (citation needed), the city also consistently makes national lists as a city with severe inequality. In 1950, Austin was fourth in the country for the most income inequality. In 2015, the Martin Prosperity Institute listed Austin as the most economically segregated city in the country (citation needed). Legacies of displacement by wealthier white Austinites and lack of access to opportunities for people of color has perpetuated racial inequity.

In an effort to address racial inequity in Austin, City Council passed Resolution No. 20150507-027, which directed the City Manager to evaluate the impact of existing city policies and practices on racial equity and develop an Equity Assessment Tool that can be used across City departments during the budget process. The Council's goal is to implement the Equity Assessment Tool and new policies to help identify and address the inequities that impact the quality of life for low-income communities in Austin, which are disproportionately communities of color.

When fully implemented, the Equity Assessment Tool will aid City of Austin departments in:

- Focusing on human centered design and building institutional empathy;
- Engaging residents in decision-making, especially those adversely affected by current conditions;
- Bringing conscious attention to racial inequities and unintended consequences before decisions are made;
- Advancing opportunities for the improvement of conditions for historically marginalized communities; and
- Affirming our commitment to equity, inclusion, and diversity.

Section ONE: DEPARTMENTAL ANALYSIS

1. What are your department's greatest equity priorities?

2. What strategies does your department employ to help avoid and/or minimize adverse effects and unintended consequences to communities of color?

3. What are the demographics of those impacted by your department's policies and services broken down by race and ethnicity?

4. What is your current racial/ethnic makeup of department staff?

5. What is the current racial/ethnic makeup of your department's contractors and consultants?

6. What strategies does your department currently employ to ensure diversity of your staff? What amount and percentage of your department's budget is allocated towards affirmatively planning to expand diversity?

7. What amount and percentage of your department's budget is allocated towards training opportunities for staff that focus on critical issues related to equity, diversity/inclusion, and/or institutional racism? Please list out those training opportunities.

8. What amount and percentage of your department's budget is allocated towards capturing residents' satisfaction with its programming and services? Are these data broken down by race, ethnicity, national origin, and income level? Please provide an attachment of your most recent resident's satisfaction report.

SECTION ONE: BUDGET

1. Identify all the ways in which your department integrates racial equity considerations into base budget planning.

2. Identify specific realignments in your department's base budget that can advance racial equity for communities of color.

3. Describe an unmet need within your budget that inhibits your department's achievement of its greatest equity priority.

4. What amount and percentage of your budget is grant funding that supports programs or services designed to advance equity for communities of color?

5. How have you involved internal and external stakeholders, including marginalized communities of color, in your department's budget process? What amount and percentage of your department's budget is allocated towards this process?

6. Identify ways in which your department's budget may disproportionately benefit some communities over others.

7. Identify ways in which your department's budget may disproportionately burden or marginalize some communities over others.

8. What is the proportion of your department's budget in relation to the City's general fund budget?

SECTION TWO: ENGAGEMENT

1. Please list all options your department offers residents to submit recommendations on programs, policies, and/or plans.

   Funds allocated and percent of base budget: _____

2. Does your department translate public documents, policies, applications, notices, and hearings for limited English speaking and persons with visual or hearing impairments? What amount and percentage of you base budget is allocated towards this process?

   - **Please describe how your department determines which public documents, policies, applications, notices, and hearings are translated for limited English speaking and persons with visual or hearing impairments.**

   - List all languages into which **public documents, policies, applications, notices, and hearings are translated for limited English speaking populations.**

3. Please describe how your department verifies the reading level of public documents, policies, applications, notices, and hearings.

4. What amount and percentage of your department's budget is allocated towards ensuring that public documents, policies, applications, notices, and hearings are concise, understandable, and readily accessible to the public?

   - Please describe your department's process for determining if public documents, policies, applications, notices, and hearings are concise, understandable, and readily accessible to the public.

   - Please describe by what means your department makes public documents, policies, applications, notices, and hearings more concise, understandable, and readily accessible to the public.

5. What amount and percentage of your department's base budget is allocated towards holding public meetings for the purpose of fact-finding, receiving public comments, and conducting inquiries?

- Please describe your department's process for determining when public meetings for the purpose of fact-finding, receiving public comments, and conducting inquiries are appropriate.

- Please describe what accommodations are made so that community members may meaningfully participate:
  - ❏ Food is provided
  - ❏ Childcare or children's activities are provided
  - ❏ ASL is provided
  - ❏ English translation provided in (please specify languages):
    - ❏ _____
    - ❏ _____
    - ❏ _____
    - ❏ _____
  - ❏ Transportation is made available for community members with mobility issues
  - ❏ Other:_____

6. Please list your department's community engagement events/activities for the past fiscal year.

7. What other strategies does your department employ to ensure accountability to communities of color in its planning process? (e.g., improved leadership opportunities, advisory committees, commissions, targeted community meetings, stakeholder groups, focus groups, increased outreach, stipended participation, etc.)

8. At what stage in your decision making process do you engage the community?

9. How do you measure the quality of your community engagement?
   - ❏ **Feedback surveys**
   - ❏ **Demographics of community meetings (esp. concerning residents of impacted communities)**
   - ❏ **Other:** _____

10. **What are you doing to understand the lived experiences of members marginalized communities?**

SECTION THREE: ALIGNMENT (with Council's Six Proposed Priorities)

City Council is considering the following proposal of these six priority areas:
- Economic Opportunity and Affordability: Having economic opportunities and resources that enable residents to lead sustainable lives in their communities.
- Mobility: Getting where and when they want to go safely and cost-effectively
- Safety: Being safe in our home, at work, and in their communities
- Health: Being able to maintain a healthy life both physically and mentally
- Cultural and Learning Opportunities: Being enriched by Austin's unique civic, cultural, ethnic, and learning opportunities
- Government that Works: Believing that City government works for everyone: that is fair and equitable; serves as a good, continuously improving and innovating steward of its resources; recruits and retains a

high performing, ethical workforce; effectively collaborates with the public; and delivers the results people expect and an experience they welcome.

1. Please describe how your department's budget and planning will positively impact economic opportunity for residents most impacted by racial and economic inequity.

2. Please describe how your department's budget and planning will positively impact mobility for residents most impacted by racial and economic inequity.

3. Please describe how your department's budget and planning will positively impact safety for residents most impacted by racial and economic inequity.

4. Please describe how your department's budget and planning will positively impact mental and physical health for residents most impacted by racial and economic inequity.

5. Please describe how your department's budget and planning will positively impact cultural and learning opportunities for residents most impacted by racial and economic inequity.

6. Please describe how your department's budget and planning will positively impact transparency and accountability for residents most impacted by racial and economic inequity.

Appendix A: History

To know where we are going, we must first know where we have been. Learning about past inequities and social justice issues in our community can prevent repeating the same mistakes.

<u>Learn More about Austin's Racial History:</u>

FROM EAT MTG:

- Resisted Brown v BoE until 1977 (not just "challenges" but active resistance to equality/equity)
- "Tale of 2 creeks "-Shoal and Waller, other creeks west v east: watershed protection, flooding, etc.

OTHER INFO:

- The "knowledge-based" (sic) economy plan. (see Eliot Tretter's *Shadows of a Sunbelt City*)
- City govt: gentleman's agreement, until a few years ago
- How people's quality of life impacted (2 KRLU docs)
- Other documents from Poder, Mama Sana/Vibrant Woman, Undoing White Supremacy Austin
- Link to full Master Plan of 1928
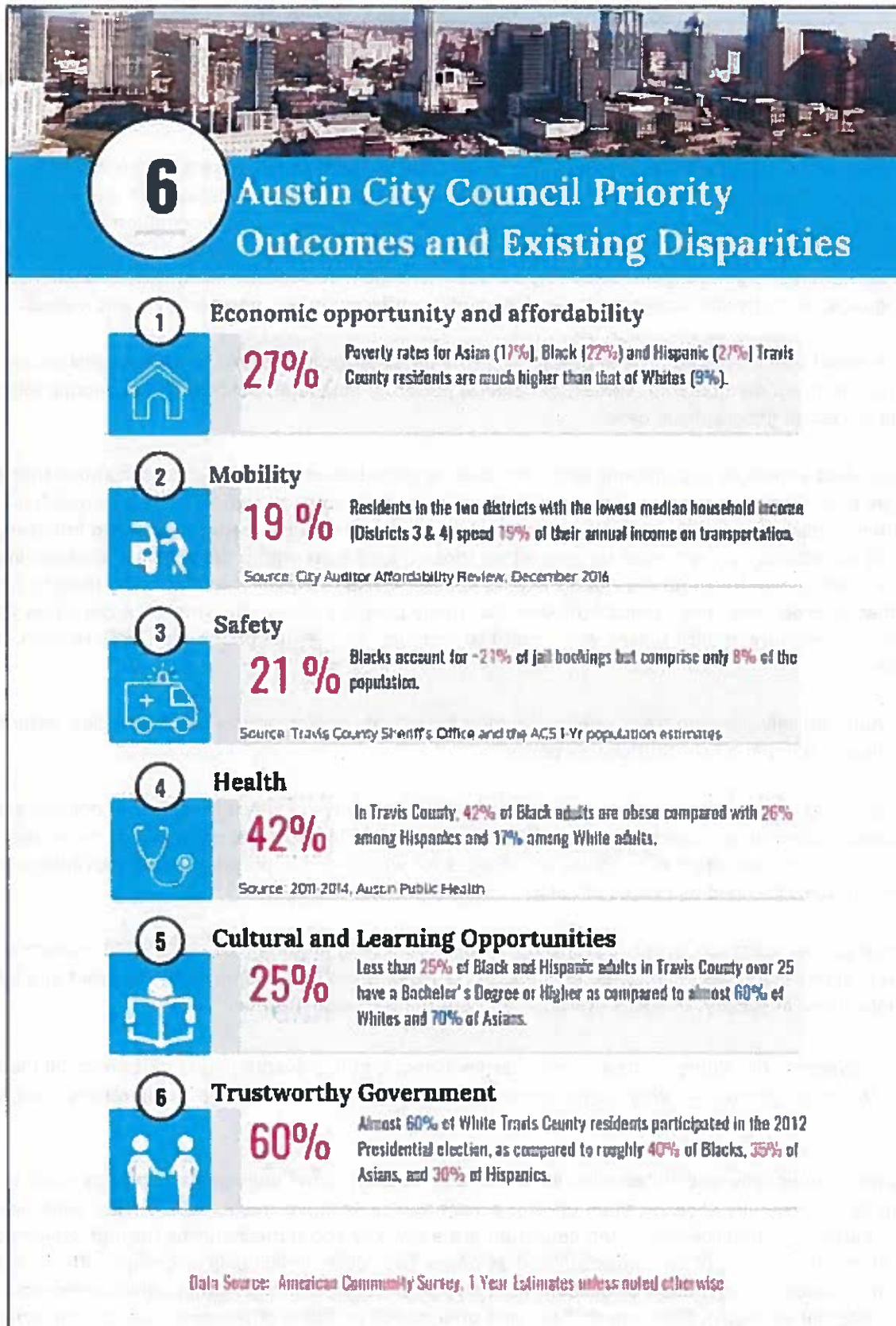
Appendix B: Steps to Building Equity

The mission of the City of Austin Equity Office is to provide leadership, guidance, and insight on equity to improve the quality of life for Austinites and achieve the vision of making Austin the most livable city in the nation for all. We strive to build and sustain a culture of equity across our city to be embedded in everything we do by tackling tough issues within City government such as institutional racism and implicit bias. Creating a culture of equity will ensure that our city is engaged with all residents, meeting their needs effectively, and minimizing the unintended negative consequences of our decisions.

Consider the following seven steps for focusing on equity within your budget:

1. **Know the History:** Consider historical events that have negatively impacted communities of color. Acknowledge them and create space for communities to share as to not repeat the same mistakes.

2. **Develop the Proposal:** What is the policy, program, practice or budget decision under consideration? What are the desired results and outcomes?

3. **Monitor Data:** What are the data? What do the data tell us?

4. **Engage the Community:** How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?

5. **Analysis and strategies:** Who will benefit from or be burdened by your proposal? What are your strategies for advancing racial equity or mitigating unintended consequences?

6. **Implementation:** What is your plan for implementation?

7. **Accountability and communication:** How will you ensure accountability, communicate, and evaluate results?

Appendix C: Proposed City Council Priorities Infographic

6 Austin City Council Priority Outcomes and Existing Disparities

1 Economic opportunity and affordability

27% Poverty rates for Asian (17%), Black (22%) and Hispanic (27%) Travis County residents are much higher than that of Whites (9%).

2 Mobility

19 % Residents in the two districts with the lowest median household income (Districts 3 & 4) spend 19% of their annual income on transportation.

Source: City Auditor Affordability Review, December 2016

3 Safety

21 % Blacks account for ~21% of jail bookings but comprise only 8% of the population.

Source: Travis County Sheriff's Office and the ACS 1-Yr population estimates

4 Health

42% In Travis County, 42% of Black adults are obese compared with 26% among Hispanics and 17% among White adults.

Source: 2011-2014, Austin Public Health

5 Cultural and Learning Opportunities

25% Less than 25% of Black and Hispanic adults in Travis County over 25 have a Bachelor's Degree or Higher as compared to almost 60% of Whites and 70% of Asians.

6 Trustworthy Government

60% Almost 60% of White Travis County residents participated in the 2012 Presidential election, as compared to roughly 40% of Blacks, 35% of Asians, and 30% of Hispanics.

Data Source: American Community Survey, 1 Year Estimates unless noted otherwise

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Appendix D: Glossary of Terms

SOURCE: http://racialequitytools.org/glossary

<u>Discrimination</u> - The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and other categories.

<u>Diversity</u> - Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender — the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used — but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.

<u>Ethnicity</u> - A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base.

<u>Implicit bias</u> - Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals' stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is often used to measure implicit biases with regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other topics.

<u>Inclusion</u> - Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

<u>Institutional racism</u> - Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of color.

<u>Intersectionality</u> - An approach largely advanced by women of color, arguing that classifications such as gender, race, class, and others cannot be examined in isolation from one another; they interact and intersect in individuals' lives, in society, in social systems, and are mutually constitutive.

<u>Oppression</u> - Systemic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing, and disadvantaging of certain social identities in contrast to the privileged norm; when some people are denied something of value, while others have ready access.

<u>Power</u> - Power is unequally distributed globally and in U.S. society; some individuals or groups wield greater power than others, thereby allowing them greater access and control over resources. Wealth, whiteness, citizenship, patriarchy, heterosexism, and education are a few key social mechanisms through which power operates. Although power is often conceptualized as power over other individuals or groups, other variations are power with (used in the context of building collective strength) and power within (which references an individual's internal strength). Learning to "see" and understand relations of power is vital to organizing for progressive social change.

Prejudice - A pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics.

Privilege - Unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to ALL members of a dominant group (e.g. white privilege, male privilege, etc.). Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because we're taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it.

Race - A political construction created to concentrate power with white people and legitimize dominance over non-white people.

Racial and ethnic identity - An individual's awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group; the racial and ethnic categories that an individual chooses to describe him or herself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience.

Racial equity

Racism - For purposes of this site, we want users to know we are using the term "racism" specifically to refer to individual, cultural, institutional and systemic ways by which differential consequences are created for groups historically or currently defined as white being advantaged, and groups historically or currently defined as non-white (African, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, etc.) as disadvantaged.

Structural racism - The normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal – that routinely advantage Whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. Structural racism encompasses the entire system of White domination, diffused and infused in all aspects of society including its history, culture, politics, economics and entire social fabric. Structural racism is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of racism. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism – all other forms of racism emerge from structural racism.

White privilege - Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it.